

Kiewel Brewery  
508 Northeast 7th Street  
Little Falls  
Morrison  
Minnesota

HAER-MN-1

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver Colorado 80225

Kiewel Brewery  
HAER-MN-1  
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## Historic American Engineering Record

### Kiewel Brewery

Location: 508 Northeast Seventh Street  
Little Falls, Minnesota 56345

Date of Construction: 1895 circa

Renovated: 1913, 1958

Present Owner: City of Little Falls

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: The Kiewel Brewery is the only example of a brewery in Little Falls or the surrounding areas. It was economically important for many years. It was constructed with a distinctive locally manufactured yellow brick.

Report Assembled By: Lynn Even  
Housing Rehabilitation Coordinator  
City of Little Falls, Minnesota

February 1983

### Historical Information

Located on a quiet residential street in Little Falls, Minnesota, the Kiewel Brewery now stands a reminder of a once prosperous industry.

With the purchase in 1893 of a small brewery located in northeast Little Falls, Jacob Kiewel began an industry which brought prosperity to many over the next 65 years.

Although there was a steam brewery plant already operated in the building owned by Rudolph Koch, it wasn't until Jacob Kiewel purchased and took over the operation of the brewery that the brewing of beer began to have any significant effect on the economy of Little Falls and the surrounding area. By 1913, the Kiewel Brewery Company was the fifth largest manufacturing firm in the Little Falls area.(1)

The beer produced by the Kiewel Brewery was at first distributed locally with shipments being made in horse drawn carts going no farther than a team could travel and return in one day. Later the territory was expanded to encompass an area covering central and northwestern Minnesota as well as the northeastern part of North Dakota.

Kiewel Brewery beer, described as "A Mild Tonic, A Liquid Food," was originally marketed primarily in kegs and was called "Kiewel's Standard". Later, the name was changed to "White Rose" and more emphasis was placed on bottled beer. Later still, the

1. Fuller, Clara. Morrison and Todd Counties. 1915

name was changed to "White Seal" and canned beer was added to the packaging line. In 1943 the brewery introduced its last brand of beer, "Super White Seal", which was well accepted throughout the entire area served.(2)

Coal was used to heat the malt in a large kiln. From the kiln the beer went to the coolers and then on to vats where it was aged. Once the beer was fully aged, it was piped to the bottling house where it was bottled, capped and labeled by machines.

The bottles used at the Kiewel Brewery were shipped by train. Bottles were not crated but simply stacked in the freight cars. Local children often helped restack the bottle once they reached the brewery.

Beer could also be purchased in kegs from the Kiewel Brewery. Although aluminum kegs were used in later years, originally the beer was stored in oak kegs which were made at the brewery. An empty oak keg weighed 75 pounds.(3)

During the Prohibition Era, the Kiewel Brewery was used as an ice cream plant and creamery with products marketed under the Kiewel brand name. The brewery also housed a candy-jobbing business. The company name was changed during this time to Kiewel Associated Products.

With the end of Prohibition, the business of making beer once again got underway. During these depression years the

2. Frank Kiewel, Jr.

3. Mike Krych

Kiewel Brewery started producing a small four gallon barrel of beer. These small barrels became very popular for parties and sold for \$2.00.

World War II forced the brewmasters at Kiewel Brewery to try substitute ingredients in their beer. During this time Kiewel beer was made with white corn and molasses. Despite the trying times, Kiewel Brewery continued to prosper employing 36 men in 1948.

The Brewery continued to produce beer under the Kiewel family management until 1959 when the building was leased to the Grain Belt Brewery Company. Grain Belt leased the brewery until 1961 after which the building was vacant until James Snow's purchase of it in 1970. Until December 1982 he had operated a small manufacturing business in the northwest corner of the building. The City of Little Falls purchased the building in December 1982 with the intentions to remove the structure and build a senior community center.

The Kiewel Brewery building which once housed a thriving business vital to the community, now stands in a state of total disrepair.

#### Biographical Information

The history of the Kiewel Brewery would be incomplete without mention of the family that owned and operated it.

Jacob Kiewel, who as a small child was brought to this country from Germany, operated a brewery for 16 years in Fergus Falls, Minnesota before moving to Little Falls and founding the Jacob Kiewel Brewery Company. Prior to its incorporation in July of 1906, Jacob Kiewel had operated the brewery as a sole proprietorship. With the incorporation of the brewery, Jacob took into the business four of his sons:

George C. (Mike)

Joseph L. (Fritz)

Frank

Benjamin

Frank Kiewel, Sr., played a prominent role in the City's public affairs both in his private life and as Mayor of Little Falls for 2 terms. Frank was also President of the Minnesota Brewers' Association for more than twenty years.

George Kiewel served on the Little Falls City Council for several terms before moving to Canada where he operated breweries during the Prohibition Era in the United States. After the repeal of Prohibition George returned to Little Falls and the Kiewel Brewery.

Jacob Kiewel was the Company's brewmaster until his death in 1953. He was followed as brewmaster by Harold and Morman A. (Duke) Kiewel.

Benjamin Kiewel lived most of his adult life in Crookston,

Minnesota where he was associated with his brother Charles in the Kiewel Brewing Company of Crookston. Later Benjamin lived in Thief River Falls, Minnesota where he acted as a distributor of Kiewel Beer and owned a soft drink bottling company.

Other business interests of the Kiewel family included several banks in Minnesota and South Dakota, land and buildings in downtown Little Falls as well as in other communities in the state. A granite quarry, a granite finishing plant, a soft drink company, and an oil company all located in Little Falls plus several farms in Morrison County, Minnesota were also included in the Kiewel family business enterprises.

Building Description

Kiewel Brewery Building

Little Falls, Minnesota

1. Summary Description  
and  
Architectural Merit:

The Kiewel Brewery Building is a three story structure constructed in what is considered a mill style. The southwest corner section of the building which once housed the malt kiln is approximately one-half story higher with a raised roof. The exterior and two interior bearing walls are constructed of yellow wire cut bricks which were manufactured locally at the O. Duclos Brickyards. A brick parapet extends approximately 3" above roof level around the perimeter of the building. The facade of the building is divided horizontally by brick pilasters.



2. Condition of Fabric: Although structurally sound, the Kiewel Brewery has been determined economically unfeasible to restore due the extreme deterioration.

#### Detailed Description

1. Foundation: Native field stone and mortar.
2. Wall Construction: Exterior and interior walls are constructed of 4" x 8" wire cut bricks. Wall thickness ranges from 4 to 6 layers of brick.
3. Structural Systems: Masonary exterior and interior bearing walls. The first floor is concrete slab on grade, the second floor is a reinforced concrete slab supported by steel or concrete beams and columns. The third floor is constructed of wood and is supported by wood beams and columns.
4. Additions: A concrete block addition was added on the east side of the building in 1958.

5. Openings, Doorways,  
Windows:

The original building was served by 2 wide loading doors located on the west side as well as 2 standard size doors. Double hung sash windows are well spaced throughout the entire building.

6. Roof-shape and  
Covering:

The roof is flat with wood rafters, wood deck and asphalt roofing.

Detailed Description of Interior

1. Floor Plans:

In plan, the building measures 108 x 112'. There is a one story appendage 34' x 17' at the northwest corner. Two east-west interior masonry bearing walls separate the building into three units. The northernmost unit is 34' wide, the middle unit is 50' wide, and the southernmost unit is 24' wide. Due to the type of manufacturing taking place in this building, floors were at staggered levels to accommodate the huge vats and malt kiln.

2. Stairways:

There are five stairways scattered throughout the building. Four stairways are in good construction and the fifth which is located in the office section is constructed of concrete.

3. Floor, Wall and  
Ceiling Finish:

The walls in the Kiewel Brewery Building were of exposed brick except in the office area which were plastered. Floors and ceilings were functional with exposed beams and bare wood or cement throughout the building.

Site

1. General Setting:

The Kiewel Brewery is located on the corner of 7th Street and 5th Avenue Northeast. Surrounding the Brewery is a quiet residential area containing some of the oldest homes in Little Falls.

2. Outbuildings:

Old records indicate that prior to 1915 the Kiewel Brewery Company consisted of the main brewery building, 2 brick buildings one of which housed the office and bottling works and 2 frame buildings, one serving as an ice house and the other as a cooper shed, keg storage shed and wagon shed. Records indicate that the 2 brick outbuildings were demolished in the early 1970's due to severe deterioration. No mention is made of when the 2 frame buildings were demolished. There are no outbuildings currently standing.

Principal References

Little Falls Daily Transcript

Fisher, Harold. Land Called Morrison. 1972

Fuller, Clara. Morrison and Todd Counties. 1915

Meyer, Borgman and Johnson, Inc.  
Consulting Structural Engineers  
810 Plymouth Building  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402

Sanborn Map Company  
11 Broadway  
New York, New York

Mr. Mike Krych (former employee of Kiewel Brewery)  
Resident of Little Falls, Minnesota

Frank D. Kiewel, Jr.  
Resident of Minneapolis, Minnesota

Jan Warner  
Executive Director  
Morrison County Historical Society

**WE PUBLIC SCHOOL**  
**AM. LIGHTS ELECTRIC.**  
**ITY WATER.**

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5TH AV.  
N.E.

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7TH

ST. N. E.

6" W PIPE

JAC. KIEWEL BREWING CO.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON ONLY. HEAT STEAM-  
FUEL (COIL LIGHTS- ELECTRIC- CITY WATER -  
ABOUT 400' 1 1/2" RUBBER HOSE. DISTRICT -  
1 1/2" EACH FLOOR OF BREW. NO. WITH 25 HOSE ATT'D.

WAG  
SHE

NEG  
STORAGE COOPER  
H' • SNEP  
H.2

62. LONG.  
ICE No.

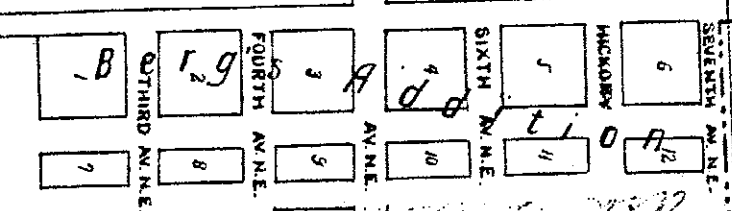
# LITTLE FALLS

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INSURANCE MAPS OF

**LITTLE FALLS** MORRISON Co.

MINNESOTA

SANBORN MAP COMPANY

11 BROADWAY NEW YORK.

July 1915

Copyright 1915 by the Sanborn Map Co.

SCALE  
50 FT. TO AN INCH.

Population 7000. Prevailing Winds, N.W.

### WATER FACILITIES

Direct pressure system of water works owned and operated by the Water Power Co., a private corporation. Water supply from Mississippi River. One Gordon duplex water power pump (12-12) and one Smith-Vaile duplex water power pump (9-10) capacity of each, one million galls per 24 hours. About 9 1/2 miles of water pipes, 6" to 10" diam. laid in 1880. 30 double and 3 triple hydrants. Domestic pressure 56 lbs. Fire pressure 90 to 130 lbs. Average daily consumption 1/2 million galls. Pine Tree Lumber Co's pumps are connected with the city system and can be used in case of necessity.

### FIRE DEPARTMENT

One regular paid man, 128 volunteers paid for service. Seven companies. One combination auto. truck with 1250 ft. of 2 1/2" cotton, rubber lined hose. 40 gall. chemical tank, 250 ft. 1" chem. hose and 60 ft. of ladders. Four hand hose carts with 3000 ft. 2 1/2" cotton, rubber hose. Two 55 gall. hand chemical engines with 175 ft. 1" hose each. One hook and ladder truck with 84 ft. of ladders.